

# MEETING SUMMARY

## WATER QUALITY ADVISORY GROUP

### March 12, 2001

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#### **Members Attending**

William Anderson, agricultural community (3-3)  
Vince Berg, business community (3-3)  
John Buric, agricultural community (3-3)  
Carter McCamy, business community, Chair (2-3)  
Hend Galal-Gorchev, scientific/academic community (3-3)  
Doug Holy, environmental community (3-3)  
Jeff Longsworth, public-at-large (2-3)  
Lynn Mayo, scientific/academic community (2-3)  
Chris Namovicz, public-at-large (3-3)  
Shobhana Sharma, business community, Vice-chair (3-3)  
Diane S. Shea, public-at-large (2-3)

#### **Public Agency Reps**

Dr. Mohammad Habibian, public agency, WSSC (3-3)  
Cameron Wiegand, public agency, DEP (3-3)

#### **Members Absent**

Robert Johnson, scientific/academic community (2-3)  
Marshall Rea, agricultural community (2-3)  
Kraig Walslaben, environmental community (1-3)  
Paula Wang, environmental community (1-3)  
Jeff Zyontz, public agency, M-NCPPC (2-3)

#### **Others Attending**

Chris Choppin, EQR, applicant  
Boyd Church, DEP  
Diane M. Davis, DEP  
John Kuriawa, resident, applicant  
Doug Redmond, M-NCPPC

#### **Welcome & Discussion/Approval of Agenda & Previous Month's Summary**

The Chair opened the meeting by adding asking for changes to either previous summary or current agenda. A member mentioned that tracking of attendance should begin anew in January of each year and Ms. Davis acknowledged the new practice. The Chair noted that there would be changes to a New & Continued Business item listing of a mid-river intake issue. After Dr. Habibian provided clarification on the topic, it was removed from the agenda. Then both summary and agenda were then approved. Mr. Wiegand, DEP, reported that the Executive announced additional funds would be directed towards the Forest Preservation Strategy, and thanked Mr. Berg for introducing his timely resolution, and the Group for their equally timely action in adopting it.

#### **Biological and Physical Stream Monitoring in County And State**

Keith Van Ness, DEP, gave a handout of this topic and went through it directly (*see handout for greater detail*). Highlights include:

- DEP completed the 1<sup>st</sup> five year baseline monitoring cycle
- Published Countywide Stream Protection Strategy (CSPS)
- Provided monitoring data and other information on DEP web site
- Completed Special Protection Area (SPA) Program baseline monitoring
- Transmitted data to NPDES permit report and statewide quality reports
- Program has received national recognition
- Next 5 year monitoring cycle will include:
  1. Working with MD State (using this monitoring as an important tool ) to assess cumulative impacts and better meet permit requirements
  2. This includes data sharing (changes to watershed scale, methods); ways to increase efficiency;
  3. Will update the CSPS to ensure no data gaps remain

- SPA Conservation Plans written for all the special protection areas, now available on DEP's site: [www.askdep.com](http://www.askdep.com) (annual SPA Report due out soon and Group can have update and presentation)
- DEP is beginning new amphibian and nesting bird monitoring programs to develop baseline information for ecological indices used to track trends DEP's regular assessment report as environmental conditions in the County.

Questions were raised about restoration at the tributary and community levels, and Mr. Wiegand talked about DEP's work in this area with the several watershed studies underway, several projects under construction and over 75 projects in design.

### **Future Water Supply Demands and Use of The Potomac River Source and Related Flow Maintenance Needs For Biological Resource Support**

Dr. Habibian provided 2 handouts and went over them briefly ("*2020 Water Demand and Resource Availability Analysis*" and *Environmental Instream Flow Requirements*." He pointed to different flow rates: optimum, minimum, survival, and flushing. He pointed to the conclusions in the first report that the current system of resources is adequate to meet the most likely and high growth estimates of 2020 demands even if the worst drought of record was to be repeated. However, significant water releases from the reservoirs would be required.

There was broad discussion on the 100 mgd as minimum flow-by standard. Mr. Wiegand distributed a handout from David Lake, DEP. Mr. Wiegand then expressed the notion that WSSC is a utility whose current revenue base can create some potential conflicts with the WSSC's support of conservation measures intended to reduce long term water demand. He stressed the importance of public education and changing behavior and water use practices over time. Mr. Lake's paper presented information on:

- a) drought definition, notification and response planning
- b) water conservation planning
- c) Potomac River low flow natural resource impact analysis (flow-by review).

The paper's overall premise was that water demand projects and conservation opportunities need to be assessed more carefully.

Dr. Habibian responded that per capita water use had actually declined over the past number of years, despite an increasing population. He stated that WSSC does utilize and promote water conservation measures in several ways to its users.

Mr. Van Ness discussed the uncertain historical derivation of the 100 mgd Potomac River flowby requirements and that it is being reviewed by a technical committee chaired by Paul Massicot of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. The WQAG will be kept updated as issues arise.

### **Public Outreach and Earth Day Activities**

Doug Holy spoke about activities sponsored and coordinated by the Friends of Cabin John Creek Watershed for Earth Month. The primary day is April 28, when many tributaries will hold stream clean-ups. The FOCJCW communicates closely with DEP and link websites. This allows for a very broad reach to the public. Ms. Davis urged the members to visit [www.askdep.com](http://www.askdep.com) to locate any Earth Day activity in/around their particular watersheds in which they might like to become involved. She described them as ranging from tree plantings in Paint Branch (and other locations), pulling invasive weeds with M-NCPPC, the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Potomac River Clean-up in dozens of locations, to name just a few. She described the activities as family-oriented and a great opportunity to get hands-on in local stream valleys. She mentioned that members should call her at 240-777-7714, or Michelle Grace, Volunteer Coordinator, M-NCPPC 301-495-2504 to obtain much more information.

The Group recommended that DEP's website be broadcast or advertised more widely than it is currently, such as bumper stickers or radio spots. Most members said the web is packed with useful information for residents, but unless the communities *know* about it – the site will remain unvisited by residents. Ms. Davis spoke of the increase in web 'hits' including international. The topic was closed with a unanimous urge for DEP to find creative ways to make their website more visible and to announce it more widely.

### **New or Continued Business**

- Grant Support from WQAG to DEP - Mr. Wiegand, DEP, thanked all members for the letters of support and/or resolutions which had assisted DEP in obtaining much-needed and heretofore hard to get grants from several different sources. He said that without their support the State dollars might not have been awarded. The funds are a valuable contribution towards stream restoration and CIP work going on throughout various watershed, especially Rock Creek. He mentioned that other letters may be presented to them for future grant applications and the WQAG's continued support is appreciated.
- WQAG on the Web – Ms. Davis said that April would be the month in which she would have begun a page on the County web, through DEP's page. She recommended simplicity in its format, to include agendas, summaries and members information (as each wished to submit/appear). All members agreed and asked to see an update in April 2001.
- Membership – Ms. Davis reminded the Group that the closing date for new applicants and incumbents to apply was April 14, 2001. She had met with the Executive's Offices to assess the range of candidates for each category, and would likely extend the announcement for Agriculture Representative due to lack of applications. She mentioned that as soon as applications were sent to her by Mr. Duncan's office, the interview committee (Ms. Davis, Mr. Rea, and Mr. Johnson) would begin conducting interviews towards recommendations. Incumbents were reminded they must also re-apply by sending updated work and residence information to her in a timely manner. The topic was closed with a reminder for each member to assess the time commitment in relation to sustaining good membership standing.

Mr. Berg inquired about February's vote for Vice-chair, which Shobhana Sharma had won. He had a different understanding of the process, and thought that a vote for chair would occur after Mr. McCamy's term expired. The Group held discussion surrounding the steps that occurred, and Ms. Davis read from the record of her notes from previous meeting. She said that she may not have captured in the final summary the letter of what was in her hand-written February notes. However, it was her clear understanding, per the pen notes, that the Group's actions occurred as follows: Ms. Sharma would immediately become Vice-chair and serve until the month of the current chair's departure (likely June), at which time she would assume the Chair position. The months leading up to the current chair's departure would find Ms. Sharma in somewhat of an 'apprentice' role of Vice-chair until she ultimately assumed the Chair position. Mr. Berg said he did not agree, this was not his perspective, and he felt the issue remains open for further discussion at a subsequent meeting. Mr. McCamy, Chair, said that the Group may do so, but not until after his departure.

- Guidance to Reduce Agricultural Pollution – The Chair asked Mr. Anderson to take the lead on presenting this topic, and asked if others had related information. Mr. Kuriawa, public at large visitor, said that he may have information and would relay anything relevant.

### **Next Month's (April 2001) Agenda Topics**

- Guidance to Reduce Agricultural Pollution – Mr. Anderson
- Operating budgets for water programs - DEP, DPS, M-NCPPC
- Growth: environmental pressures resulting to water resources which County will face (*possible WQAG recommendations*) ----- *this topic was not addressed at the March meeting in a manner to identify specific speakers or presenters for the topic; will be carried forward for decision and/or discussion.*